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British O.R.T. News

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THE TASK

by

Mr. A. J. HALPERN,

Chairman of the British O.R.T. and a
Vice-President of the World O.R.T.
Union.

THE O.R.T. problem of training skilled workers for essential trades seems simple on paper. After the second world war it has become probably one of the most difficult and most vital problems which world Jewry has to overcome. Let us remember some figures.

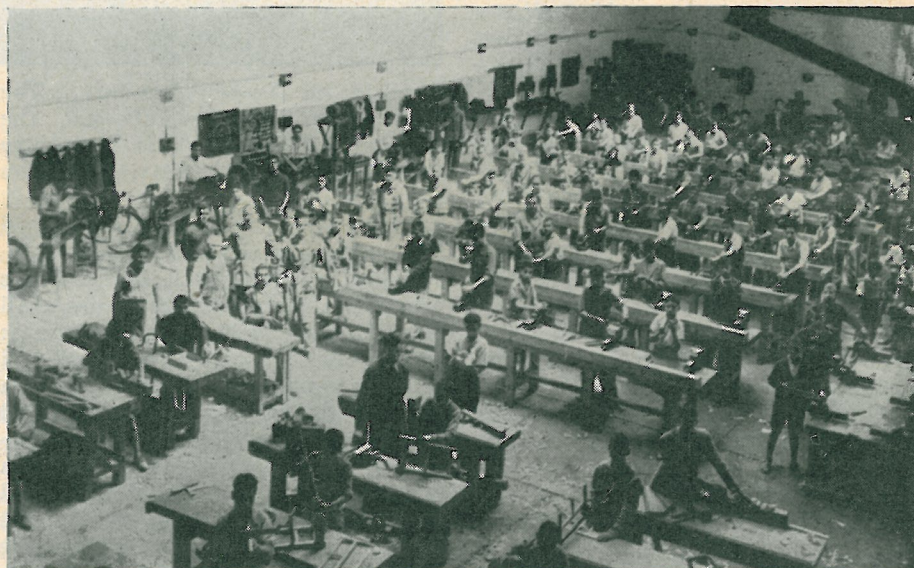
The Jewish population in Europe before the war in 1939 numbered about ten million, out of whom about 3½ million lived in Soviet Russia. In 1946 this figure came down to 4,255,000, out of whom 2,655,000 were in Soviet Russia and about 350,000 in the United Kingdom. The number of Jews in European countries, outside Soviet Russia and the United Kingdom, dropped thus from 6,055,000 to 1,200,000.

It is these 1,200,000 in whom O.R.T. is primarily interested. Their social and economic conditions of life have been totally disrupted. When liberation came, such Jews as remained alive found their livelihood gone. They had to build up a life on entirely new foundations. In the countries of Eastern Europe an entirely new economic system was in formation. The Jews had the choice—to perish, to emigrate or to adjust themselves to the new life; to fit themselves into a new society as useful and productive members.

There is no point in dwelling on the impossibility of immediate mass emigration, not that nobody wants untrained and unskilled immigrants. Here is where the work of the O.R.T. comes in. It is not the business of the O.R.T. to ask what plans the individual Jew makes for his future; whe-

ther he wants to settle down in his own country or to emigrate to Palestine or elsewhere. O.R.T. wants the Jew—ruined, uprooted, often demoralised after years of intolerable suffering—to become a socially healthy and productive member of society who would be valuable and valued by any country in which he decides to live and work. This can be achieved only by systematic and specialised training in properly organised vocational establishments. No half-hearted schooling which turns out, in a few months, a complete ignoramus into a half-baked “craftsman” can be of any use, or is of any interest, to the O.R.T. The boys and girls who pass through the schools of the O.R.T. must be able to take their place in the productive activity of the country, on an equal footing with any skilled workman. We have to pay particular attention to the special requirements of the industry and agriculture of the respective countries in order to direct our trainees to such occupations which are most required locally.

We can already derive some satisfaction from results so far achieved. 33,747 pupils passed through our schools during the year 1st July, 1947, to 30th June, 1948. 8,128 graduated. On the 1st July, 1948, we had 20,134 pupils in our schools in Europe and French North Africa. Our work in France, Italy, Roumania, Poland and Bulgaria has received most liberal support from the respective countries. The I.R.O. has also helped a lot, but we could never have achieved these results without the generous contribution from the American Joint Distribution Committee. We received from the Joint Distribution Committee \$2,000,000 in 1947, and the Committee undertook to give us \$2,400,000 in 1948. South African Jewry was equally generous, and the interest which our work attracts in South Africa has been most encouraging. It is now time for British Jewry to do their part by participating in this important work of rehabilitation. There is no other way to solve the problem of European Jewry.



Mechanics School—Casablanca, North Africa.

The Institute for Jewish Vocational Instructors

By DR. A. SYNGALOWSKI

(Co-Chairman, Executive Committee, World O.R.T. Union)

IN the Jewish world and, more particularly, among Jewish youths, the O.R.T. has long ceased to be a newcomer. The name, as well as the work, of the Organisation are well known. Both the aim of the organisation and its character and methods are directed towards the awakening and the development of the working powers of our people. The most pronounced characteristic of the organisation is the constant effort to create and build, to expand and to grow. This organisation does not acquiesce in what has already been achieved and the initiative is constantly taken to widen its work into new fields. It is due to this fact that the range of trades taught and spread by the O.R.T. has grown so rich and varied—from needlework to metal work and electricity, from field work and gardening to fishery and sea-diving, from motor-car engineering to seafaring. And now we have even an O.R.T. school for aircraft pilots, a new and strange kind of "Luftmenschen" among Jews.

O.R.T.'s planning knows no standstill. In its laboratories research and preparations go on always, and we now learn of a new and unusual edifice of its kind having been erected. A higher O.R.T. school, wherein craftsmen will be trained not for the industries but for O.R.T. itself and for the educational network of O.R.T. An institute to educate teachers—the School of Schools—a central institute to bring up instructors and principals for vocational schools.

The nature of our teaching programme and the character of the teaching personnel would indicate that it is intended to bring up a new Jewish Intelligentsia, new in so far as it is planned to combine a wide knowledge, general and Jewish, with ability to do precise technical work in the workshops. From the O.R.T. Institute will come teachers and instructors well trained in theory and in practice, who will lead in the work of Jewish rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The Central O.R.T. Institute consists, to begin with, of three sections—Metal-work, Electricity, Woodwork.

In addition to the technical skill required in the respective trades, the programme of the Institute will include subjects which will fit the students to become instructors, such as psychology, pedagogy, the history of the respective trade, methods of vocational training used in various coun-

tries for various categories of trainees; young, adults, invalids, convalescents, and so forth.

Among the subjects of the Institute's programme will also be Jewish General History, Economic History, History of the Jewish Labour Movement, Hebrew and Yiddish. For the time being 85 students will be admitted. Their age will be 18—21. They will be sent from various countries according to a certain quota, and there will be among them youths from Israel and South America. The training period will be three and a half years, and before the graduates take on the posts which O.R.T. will find for them they will have to do practical work in various Trade Schools for a year and a half.

The Institute has living quarters for 175 persons and the estate attached to it has a park and a large garden for the use of the residents.

The Institute is situated at Anières, near Geneva, in a beautiful locality



close to the French frontier. The views from the Institute are the Geneva Lake and the Jura Mountains on one side and the Savoy Alps on the other. The future instructors will be able to live in conditions which will foster sound minds in sound bodies.

In the central O.R.T. Institute the practical and theoretical studies shall be permeated with this one thought: that in our schools, both in Israel and in other countries, this class division between instructor and theoretical teacher, hand-worker and brain-worker, is non-existent, and this idea must disappear. Each graduate will be trained for both. During the last three semesters, the students in the various departments of study will be under observation as to whether each

has the inclination and the abilities to specialise either as workshop master or class instructor. Much of the Institute's work will consist in fusing a great deal of the technical and theoretical studies with that of the workshop technique.

As mentioned above, the programme of the Institute will include all branches of metal work, electricity and wood-craft making. The aim of the training is not only to teach the students to make electrical apparatus or furniture, but also and mainly to learn to teach others, to build up a body of pedagogues in the field of Jewish Vocational Education. With this aim in view, special attention will be given to the selection of students according to their abilities in matters of the trades in question, and more particularly in respect of teaching others.

The candidates, besides having a general and vocational knowledge, must also possess the ability to ex-

press themselves clearly, a bent for teaching others, a way to influence others by their own exemplary behaviour, organisational talents and very live feeling for our social and national duties.

For the Jewish People, the Institute should be an instrument for strengthening its creative powers, for the O.R.T. Union it will be a means for securing the development of its vocational work.

For capable youths a road is being opened on which to advance to a good social and material position in the important service of our people. The Youth Organisations are in this way given an opportunity to actively participate in forming a nucleus for leading Jewish personalities.

WITH O.R.T. THROUGH EUROPE

For this month we are summarising reports given by the delegates at the Annual Meeting of the Central Board of the World O.R.T. Union, which took place recently in Paris.

Germany and Austria

DR. HABER, Adviser on Jewish Affairs to the United States Army in Germany and Austria, paid tribute to the work that he had seen carried out by the O.R.T. amongst Jewish D.P.s. He reported that Generals Clay and Keyes had said that they had the greatest respect for every organisation assisting Jewish D.P.s, but nothing that was being done for the D.P.s, except emigration itself, meant as much as providing technical skill for a useful life.

General Clay had urged that this aspect of the work could not be placed in a subordinate position.

Emigration possibilities existed for overseas countries, but only to the extent that trained people could be sent there and would be welcome, even in Israel. Priority would be given to those who could support themselves and the economy of Israel.

The work of O.R.T. must be strengthened and improved if the D.P.s had to get out. Even the increase of their morale was important; it helped to avoid idleness.

Dr. O. Dutch, Director for O.R.T. operations in Germany, reporting on conditions there, said that by instituting six, nine and twelve months' courses, the O.R.T. had overcome the feeling of uncertainty of candidates who had all hoped to leave shortly.

The work of the O.R.T., therefore, would continue because Jews in Germany now knew that some time would elapse before emigration became possible, that trained people were needed for emigration countries, and because work in an O.R.T. school meant gainful occupation. The immediate projects were to train the 14-17-year-olds in technical high schools, to train invalids, children and older people, so that despite the constant flow of emigrants an increase in O.R.T. activities was more than a distinct possibility.

Poland

The representative of the Central Committee of Polish Jews (Mr. Wilf) said that for the first time in history Jews in Poland had become equal citizens and were now engaged in productive work. In this respect O.R.T. has made a great contribution for the Jewish masses in Poland, and Polish Jewry greatly appreciated the comprehensiveness of O.R.T.'s programme.

Holland

THE Dutch O.R.T. Committee recently held the final examination of the top form at the Amsterdam School, "Joods Bijzonder Onderwijs," in conjunction with a parents' evening, at which a lesson in woodwork was demonstrated. In this way, approximately 100 visitors were acquainted with the daily work in an O.R.T. children's workshop. The exhibition items manufactured in the children's workshops for wood and cardboard handicrafts were examined with great interest.

The Dutch authorities are showing particular interest in the activities of the O.R.T. children's workshops. Dr.

J. C. VanHeuven, Director of the Department of Public Health in the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs, recently visited the O.R.T. institutions in the Children's Village of Ilaniah, near Apeldoorn, and participated in the opening ceremony of an institute for defective children at Apeldoorn, where O.R.T. teaches manual work. Also present at the inauguration were representatives of the Department of Justice, the Mayor and Aldermen of Apeldoorn, together with representatives of the various Jewish organisations.

In the O.R.T. children's workshops in Holland, 491 children are being given instruction in sewing, wood, cardboard and leather work.



Woodwork Class—Holland.

SWEDEN

A ROYAL GRANT

SIXTEEN D.P. instructors from O.R.T. vocational schools in Germany are receiving instruction in modern methods of vocational training at a special four-month seminar under an 80,000 kronen Royal grant from the Swedish Government. The grant was specifically earmarked for advanced training in methodology of D.P. instructors in O.R.T. schools. The seminar is being held in Sweden.

The D.P. instructors, who were specially selected for the course, will return to Germany at the end of the four-month period to take up supervisory positions in the O.R.T. system, which now has some 900 persons en-

gaged in instruction, supervision, or training. Arrangements have also been made with the Israeli Government to give them priority in immigration so that they may become a nucleus of the teaching staff of the O.R.T. programme in Israel.

The seminar course includes training in pre-vocational guidance, aptitude testing, methodology in various types of schools, latest developments in training equipment, student psychology, and school administration. The seminar is being conducted under the joint auspices of the Swedish Board of Vocational Training and the World O.R.T. Union Committee of Sweden.

A NEW YEAR APPEAL

In order to avoid a multiplicity of appeals, the British O.R.T. has joined the *United Jewish Relief Appeal*, and for the High Holydays one appeal only is being made.

The Chief Rabbi, the Very Reverend Israel Brodie (a member of the Council of British O.R.T.) has issued a message to the Community, from which we publish the following:

"I have been approached by the Central British Fund and the *United Jewish Relief Appeal* to support the call which they make at this solemn season of the year, and I ask you to give your help to these two important Jewish organisations in this country, which are working for the relief and rehabilitation of our surviving fellow-Jews in Europe.

"We had thought that now, three years after liberation, most of them would be in their new homes in Israel and elsewhere and would no longer be in need of assistance. Many have already gone. Many more will soon be on their way.

"But there are still hundreds of thousands of Jews in the camps of Germany, Austria and Italy and elsewhere throughout Europe in need of our help. The tension in the world situation makes their position more poignant.

"Help for them lies in the prospect of their transfer to the State of Israel. There are also possibilities for a number of them in the U.S.A. and other countries in Europe and overseas. But, meanwhile, they must be kept alive where they are. They must be given food and clothing, medical aid, child care, *vocational training*, and Jewish teaching, to equip them for their new life.

"We must provide them with the means to set out on their journey decently clothed and equipped and with a feeling of self-respect to reconstruct their lives and to play their part wherever they settle.

"I ask you to take to heart the work which the *United Jewish Relief Appeal* and the Central British Fund have done on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Europe during the past years.

"With my fervent prayer that the New Year may bring peace and happiness to all Israel and to all mankind.

"ISRAEL BRODIE."

Any contributions will be gratefully received by the British O.R.T., 85, New Cavendish Street, W.1., or by the offices of the U.J.R.A. at 131, Elgin Avenue, W.9.

BRITISH O.R.T.

North-West London

AT the beginning of September the inaugural meeting of the North-West London Committee was held at 45, Wykeham Road, Hendon.

The Reverend L. H. Hardman, of Hendon Synagogue, presided, and spoke of his personal experiences of O.R.T. work in Bergen-Belsen and other parts of Germany. He called for active support from all those present to help in the furtherance of this work so that the need of the surviving Jews of Europe should not fail to be met.

Mr. A. S. Bloch outlined the development of O.R.T. work since its inception, almost 70 years ago, and pointed out how the O.R.T. had always been to the forefront wherever practical help was required.

Will all those people who are interested in participating in O.R.T. activities and who live in the North-West London area, please communicate with the Honorary Secretary, Mrs. C. Freedman, 45, Wykeham Road, N.W.4 (Telephone No.: HEN-don 2278).

East London

The East London Committee is now actively engaged in organising its first big function in that area. This is to take the form of a concert at the Stoke Newington Town Hall, on Tuesday, 23rd November, 1948. Tickets are now on sale (prices 21s., 10s. 6d., 7s. 6d., and 5s.), and can be obtained from the O.R.T. Office, 85, New Cavendish Street, W.1.

A fine programme is assured and, by special request, the services of Mr. Al Burnett and the Reverend Kussevitsky have been secured.

21st Annual O.R.T. Ball

The Ball Committee of the British O.R.T. is happy to announce that the 21st annual O.R.T. Ball will take place at the Savoy Hotel on Saturday, 13th November, 1948.

Tickets are now on sale, price 2½ guineas (including dinner), and in view of the limitation on numbers, early application is recommended to the O.R.T. Office. The music will be by Frank Weir and his Orchestra, and Hermanos Deniz and his Rhumba Band from the Coconut Grove.

NEWS FROM ISRAEL

The following is an extract from a letter received from Mr. H. Geller, who was Secretary to the first Group of Students at the Goldington O.R.T. Training Centre.

This Group has been in Israel for some time now.

Gerin Angli,
Ein Hachoshah,
Hederah,
Israel.

21st August, 1948.

"Only now that the country has become comparatively quiet again (although for how long no one knows) do I find the opportunity to write to you.

"During the last half year our group has made good progress, bearing the objective conditions of war in mind. Some of our members were mobilised for the army, and the remainder has settled down to work. Many of our people are now working in responsible jobs in the settlement. We have two tractor-drivers, one cowman, three girls in the children's houses, five members work in the tinshop, and two in the workshops. The rest, as yet, in general work. However, in every piece of work do we find that the training we received in the Goldington O.R.T. Training Centre is of the utmost help and value.

"I am taking the liberty at this point to mention to you a fact that

will, I am sure, be of great interest and satisfaction to you and the whole O.R.T. Organisation. I happened to meet a number of people who at one time or another went through an O.R.T. School, and everyone without exception spoke of the help and training received from the O.R.T. with the greatest praise.

"To come back to ourselves again. We have now started negotiations with the various institutions of the country concerning our future and the establishment of our own settlement. It is almost certain that we shall be finishing our period of training here in about six months' time and leave the settlement we are living in at the moment. To go out and build the first settlement of English pioneers of our movement.

"There is no need for me to point out at length the work, energies, hardships and different needs involved in this task, which will really last a lifetime, and the benefits of which only our children and children's children will reap.

"To undertake this task with our own resources will be humanly almost impossible, and we shall have to seek the help and assistance of all our friends and wellwishers. It is in this spirit that I look to you and to the O.R.T. Organisation for assistance in the establishment of our settlement."